AUM

Time, like a seven-wheeled, seven-naved car, moves on; His rolling wheels are all the worlds, His axle is immortality.

—*Atharva Veda*

THEOSOPHY

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THE CENTENARY CYCLE

WE are, wrote H. P. Blavatsky in *Isis Unveiled* (I, 247), *"at the bottom of a cycle and evidently in a transitory state."* This was a prophetic characterization (made in 1877) of the period in which H.P.B. came to do her work. The obstacles were many, and she often listed them, especially in her prefaces. The barriers which she would try to penetrate ranged from derisive unbelief to bland complacency and proud conceit. The time, she said, was what Plato had called a "barren" period, when "the spiritual sight of the majority of mankind is so blinded as to lose every notion of the superior powers of its own divine spirit." The nineteenth century, so confident of its powers and achievements, was the inheritor of "the malignant fever of skepticism" which had broken out in the eighteenth. "The divine intellect is veiled in man; his animal brain alone *philosophizes*."

Yet in that same period—the last quarter of the nineteenth century—a tide of insistent questioning was also in evidence. While Materialism was moving toward its high noon—dominating the scientists and infecting the scholarship of the day—there were dissenting voices which challenged the assumptions of materialism and argued for a deeper understanding of both man and nature. In her article, "The Tidal Wave," H.P.B. declared that "the Spirit in man—the direct, though now but broken ray and emanation of the Universal Spirit—has at last awakened." Within the darkness of the Kali Yuga, she seemed to suggest, a cycle of very different portents was getting under way. From time to time

she would single out for recognition individuals who embodied this influence. One to whom she gave high praise was the Russian novelist, Dostoevsky, whom she called "a *born* Theosophist." She spoke with equal admiration of Leo Tolstoy, who exemplified, she said, "the occult working of the ever moving cycle." ("The Cycle Moveth.") There were similar spirits among the scientists of that day, many of whom were quoted in *The Secret Doctrine* to illustrate the reaches of intuitive perception among the interpreters of nature.

What, with all her criticism combined with revival of ancient philosophy, followed by exposition of occult metaphysics, was H.P.B. attempting to do? Her work, we may say, was twofold. She came like Krishna in a declining age (declining spiritually although materially progressive) to establish the seed of a great new cycle of human development. And again like Krishna, she engaged in a head-on encounter with the prevailing authorities of nineteenth-century civilization—the theologians, the pundits of learning, and the scientific expounders of mechanistic law. What did she expect to come of this enormous effort? Not much, immediately, if we give attention to her prefaces and occasional asides. Yet in the long term the effects to flow from the *power of occult ideas* once more given currency in the world would be great, even if incalculable. She predicted recognition of the authenticity of the *Secret Doctrine* in the twentieth century—not yet over—and said that the contents of the book would serve for the instruction of future centuries.

Those who study her writings are able to recognize the direct connection between the transcendental metaphysics of the Theosophical philosophy and the First Object of the Theosophical Movement—the establishment of the nucleus of a brotherhood of man. There could not be a true idea of man without a true conception of Deity, and only in the true idea of man—his origin, nature, and destiny—was there foundation for the brotherhood on which the entire enterprise of human evolution depends. Brotherhood, in short, requires a spiritual philosophy of life. The conditions of the nineteenth century, therefore, demanded of H.P.B. that she be both doughty iconoclast and the planter and nurturer of seeds for a new birth of human understanding. In her encounter with the world, she seemed mainly a clearer away of rubbish, a preparer of soil, and the recorder of the philosophy of the future.

In her encounter with individual students, some of whom became disciples, she taught an ethical science of self-discovery and self-development, in behalf of wider cyclic efforts to come.

She was, then, both educator and initiator. Well aware of the confinement of evolutionary progress within any particular cycle, she pressed nineteenth-century possibilities to their theoretical limit in her major work, *The Secret Doctrine,* which ranged far beyond what could be acceptable to even the best minds of that epoch. She was explicit concerning the rate of intellectual growth, and described the psychological obstacles to recognition of the higher truths in the Wisdom Religion: for example, the "idealists" so admired as great philosophers in her time—men such as Herbert Spencer, Schopenhauer, and Huxley—despite their massive intellectuality, saw the truth but dimly, as through a veil: "Even so great a thinker as Mr. Herbert Spencer speaks of the 'Unknowable' occasionally in terms that demonstrate the lethal influence of materialistic thought, which, like the deadly Sirocco, has withered and blighted all current ontological speculation." (*S.D.* I, 327.) Quite evidently, so long as Western man "philosophized" with his brain alone, the substance of the ancient teaching would be wasted or lost on all but the few.

As initiator, H.P.B. found those who by karmic endowment were ready to begin the study of occult truth, in order to fit themselves to be the educators of coming generations. These were the students who constituted the Theosophical Movement in the world—inaugurating a self-conscious and deliberate attempt to assimilate, teach, and spread the foundation doctrines of the brotherhood of man and the laws of evolutionary self-development. The Movement was the direct result of her labors and at the same time a natural expression of the law of cycles. In an article ("Recent Progress in Theosophy") addressed to the general public, H.P.B. wrote:

> The theosophical movement was a necessity of the age, and it has spread under its own inherent impulsion, and owes nothing to adventitious methods. From the first it has had neither money, endowment, nor social or governmental patronage to count upon. It appealed to certain human instincts and aspirations, and held a certain lofty ideal of perfectibility, with which the vested extraneous interests of society conflicted, and against which these were foredoomed to battle. Its strongest allies were the human yearnings for light upon the problem of life, and

> for a nobler conception of the origin, destiny, and potentialities of the human being. While materialism and its congener, secularism, were bent upon destroying not only theology and sectarian dogmatism, but even the religious conception of a diviner Self, theosophy has aimed at uniting all broad religious people for research into the actual basis of religion and scientific proofs of the existence and permanence of the higher Self. Accepting thankfully the results of scientific study and exposure of theological error, and adopting the methods and maxims of science, its advocates try to save from the wreck of cults the precious admixture of truth to be found in each. Discarding the theory of miracle and supernaturalism, they endeavor to trace out the kinship of the whole family of world-faiths to each other, and their common reconciliation with science.

This was the outlook for Theosophy in the nineteenth century. What was H.P.B.'s view of the future? She spoke only guardedly or very generally about the immediate future, no doubt being wary of shallow interpretations of what she might say. Yet there are certain broad predictions in her writings, some filled with exhilarating promise, others with ominous warnings, and still others indicating the acceleration of human development which would bring both dangers and high opportunities in our own time. The long-term picture is given on pages 445-46 of the second volume of *The Secret Doctrine*. A more immediate encouragement occurs on the last page of *The Key to Theosophy*. Anticipation of the psychological confusion and disorder now in evidence appears in a significant footnote early in her scholarly study, "The Esoteric Character of the Gospels," and the substance of this prediction seems in effect spelled out in her third and fourth Messages to the American Theosophists. Concerning the great social and political struggles that would occupy a large part of the twentieth century, she said little or nothing—perhaps to avoid the possibility that, despite her warnings concerning the futility of politics, morally impatient Theosophists would make some sort of political capital out of what she said. She did, however, refer to "the insane dreams of Socialism and of Communism," calling them "disguised conspiracies of brutal force and sluggishness against honest labour," although this characterization is put in perspective by her appreciation of the goals of another sort of Socialism, to which she gives high praise in both the *Key* and the Five Messages.

More than passing attention should be given to the brief observation in the Introductory to *The Secret Doctrine* (I, xliv)

which speaks of accounts soon to "be settled and squared between the races." That struggle is manifestly now upon us, affecting various dimensions of cultural, social, and economic life. Similar anticipations are to be found in the writings of Mr. Judge. In one of his essays on the *Bhagavad-Gita* he speaks of the socio-moral disintegrations that would overtake the United States by reason of this country's lack of inherited restraints and because of the rampant individualism which has characterized American life from the beginning of independence. Spread throughout the land, he said, "is the superstition of materialism that bows down to a science which leads only to a negation." He wrote in the *Path* of riots and coming unrest, and spoke somewhat cryptically of the "physiognomy of the United States, whereon the mighty hand of nature has traced the furrows to indicate the character of the moral storms that will pursue their course no matter what the legislation may be."

Yet in "On the Future" Mr. Judge reminds his readers that the American continent will some day be the scene of a vast evolution, and that here are gathered descendants of peoples from every part of the world—all coming together, mixing and consolidating into the stock that will eventually give birth to the next great racial division of human development. Even at the time he wrote (1892), the language and the style of thought, he said, were changing every day, and now, some eighty-four years later, it is everywhere evident that American culture has its own distinctive energy and patterns which, for good or ill, are decisively affecting life in many other countries. Another sort of transformation is referred to in a *Path* article ("Another Theosophical Prophecy"). Mr. Judge says that Sanscrit "will one day again be the language used by man upon this earth, first in science and in metaphysics, and later on in common life." This prediction is of particular interest today, by reason of recent additions to the ordinary vocabulary. Yet in 1886 Mr. Judge remarked that "the terms now preserved in that noblest of languages" would creep into "the literature and the press of the day, cropping up in reviews, appearing in various books and treatises."

What other changes have taken place since the last quarter of the nineteenth century? One striking contrast is made evident by quoting from a footnote in *The Secret Doctrine* (II, 156). Commenting on the intellectual blindness of the psychologists of her

time—their inability to recognize the significance of the work of Anton Mesmer—she said:

> Since the days of Hume, whose researches culminated in a nihilistic idealism, Psychology has gradually shifted its position to one of crass *materialism*. Hume is regarded as a psychologist, and yet he denied *a priori* the possibility of phenomena in which millions now believe, including many men of science. The Hylo-idealists of today are rank *Annihilationists*. The schools of Spencer and Bain are respectively positivist and materialist, and not metaphysical at all. It is *psychism* and not *psychology;* it reminds one as little of the Vedantic teaching as the pessimism of Schopenhauer and von Hartmann recalls the esoteric philosophy, the heart and soul of true Buddhism.

In many places in *The Secret Doctrine* H.P.B. shows that the "idealism" of thinkers sharing the assumptions of Hume is fraudulent and sterile. What she meant by the "lethal influence of materialistic thought" is amplified in relation to the ambiguous agnosticism of several influential thinkers of that time:

> Brutal but frank materialism is more honest than Janus-faced agnosticism in our days. *Monism* is the Pecksniff of modern philosophy, turning a pharisaical face to psychology and idealism, and its natural face of a Roman Augur, swelling his cheek with his tongue—to Materialism. The Monists are worse than the Materialists; because, while looking at the Universe and psycho-spiritual man from the same negative standpoint, the latter put their case far less plausibly than sceptics of Mr. Tyndall's or even Mr. Huxley's stamp. Herbert Spencer, Bain and Lewes are more dangerous to universal truths than Büchner. (I, 528 fn.)

Today, the main thrust of informed intellectuality is in a very different direction. The triumphant march of skeptical materialism has ground to an ignominious stop. An opposite mood pervades the work of the best writers. While the cloudy atmosphere spread by the rejection of any sort of spiritual intelligence still oppresses orthodox centers of learning, commonly curtailing the reach of scientific speculation, a new spirit is manifest in the books and articles which are gaining serious attention. It is as though the lines of force of a freshly emerging polarity of higher Manas are increasingly felt, generating broad hospitality to expressions which champion inward meaning and aspiration. The age of criticism and analysis is waning fast and the time of synthesizing productiveness begins to show forth fruits. It is entirely appropriate to repeat today, with renewed emphasis: "An era of disenchantment

and rebuilding will soon begin—nay, has already begun."

Consider that fifty years ago, among psychologists, the word "consciousness" was virtually anathema, and that the human being was regarded as no more than the passive mold of external stimuli. Today the situation is being reversed: "Consciousness" has become the byword of much serious inquiry, while over-use by popular writers threatens to make it an almost meaningless cliché. The sweeping momentum of the cycle brings many excesses, but the traditional barriers against transcendence in philosophy are all coming down. The mind of the race, as anyone who reads can see, has already entered a plastic condition, and while the psychic side of the cycle is more in evidence than spiritual or higher manasic activity, the hungerings of the human spirit now have free if vague expression, and any rear-guard defense of the old materialism brings immediate and forceful rejection. Presently emerging intellectual leaders will have no more of the impoverished fare provided by mechanists who are still enthralled by the nineteenth-century compulsions with which H.P.B. had to deal. Meanwhile certain assumptions of Darwinism are being challenged by modern biologists and gradually put aside.

The voices that were isolated and daring in her day are now a strengthening chorus. What H.P.B. termed the mysterious cycle of psychic and spiritual evolution is again doing the "work which, silent and unperceived, will grind to dust the most grand and magnificent structures of materialistic speculations." This is the inward explanation of the change. At the same time other causes, corresponding and collaborating, have had plainly traceable effects. The modern world—built upon the faulty foundations of aggressive exploitation of nature, raised to top-heavy dimensions by a ruthless Atlantean technology, and justified by the pseudo-morality of hedonistic indulgence and conspicuous waste—is everywhere in trouble. Within the space of a single generation, the "progress" of a civilization based on confident materialism has been overtaken by ravaging ills. The wars of the twentieth century left in their wake of suffering and injustice the paranoid policies of its middle years, framing with guilt and deep anxiety the sudden birth of a new science—Ecology—brought to universal public attention in 1962 by Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring*. The work of this brave, resourceful, and humane woman was followed by dozens of similar volumes, while, in the course of a decade, hundreds of out-

raged champions took up the defense of a Mother Nature who had suffered in silence for centuries. Conscientious scholars began to point to the historical roots in Western thought of the freebooter temper of modern technology. The anti-social and anti-human effects of social and political systems proudly built on Selfishness and Acquisition as "laws of nature" were traced and exposed by cultural historians. A new breed of poets, novelists, essayists began to use the language of Plato and to revive the themes of the Romantic poets of the early nineteenth century. The idea of the self —sometimes called the "true" self—of Intuition, and even of the "noetic" capacities of human beings—gained new currency, supplying the materials for philosophic awakening in the West. An entire school of psychology began to contest with the Behaviorists and the Freudians for the right to declare the reality of moral and spiritual potentialities in every human being. A. H. Maslow affirmed that transcendence of environment is the main business of human life.

No longer shyly hinting at the "spiritual" aspect of man, essayists now demand attention for holistic conceptions. They speak of the requirements of community and fellowship among men, and often of the brotherhood of life. Vaguely, but unmistakably, the distinction between higher and lower Manas begins to be made by poets, psychologists, social scientists, and even biologists. A substantial Platonic revival—to be noted in the work of Robert Cushman as scholar and Hannah Arendt as seminal social thinker—is spreading beneficent influence. Scientists, gathering in groups, hold seminars to oppose the reductionism of outdated biological science and to affirm the presence of hierarchical intelligence in nature. Educators are heard to speak seriously of an ancient wisdom that pervaded the classical world, emerging in Pythagoras and Plato; Bruno as philosopher, not only the heroic champion of Copernican theory, has increasingly respectful attention, while the initial Renaissance awakening of the European mind, in England and on the Continent, is shown by scholars to have had Neoplatonic roots.

Finally, there is a factor making for change which hardly existed at all in the nineteenth century. This is a growing sense of emergency—the dawning recognition of crisis in human affairs. The psychological, social, and moral disorders of the time have become notorious, while rising prices and the warnings of dimin-

ished food and energy supplies leave no thinking person in doubt that vast changes in everyday habits, modes of production, distribution, and consumption are inexorably on the way.

These pressures from without, which seem inescapable and sure to increase, can be expected to act as insistent provocatives of intensive questioning. Today there is nothing like the complacency which pervaded the Victorian age. The daily press, for all its superficiality, cannot hide the seething unrest very close to the surface of present-day life. All the signs point to the fact that the modern world is about to undergo great if not yet defined adjustments to sheer necessity.

One plainly evident area of response to these signs has been in fields of nutrition and agriculture. The idea of "working with nature" has taken strong hold. In France, England, and America there are rapidly expanding movements developing a new sort of science for the growing of food, and pervading these undertakings is sincere determination to achieve cooperative relationships with nature. Closely connected with these movements has been the spread of interest in the restoration of "community," which may be recognized as an everyday application of the idea of brotherhood. At the same time the need for morally based and humanly scaled industry has been recognized by an increasing number of people. A new generation of scientists and other resourceful individuals is busy developing the skills and patterns of non-exploitive life on the land, and a mood of genuine fraternity unites the widespread members of this spontaneously emerging fellowship.

All these activities represent a kind of brotherhood in practice, and it is increasingly apparent that their achievements may point the way to the practical basis of life in a changed and better society. In "Our Cycle and the Next" H.P.B. spoke approvingly of "small communities" which suffer no periodic economic disasters and create environments hospitable to human need, and it now seems clear that those who scale their lives in harmony with the conceptions formulated by leaders such as Arthur Morgan and E. F. Schumacher will help to provide a better foundation for thinking about the meaning of human life. Matrices of change will be required at various levels, and the immediate urgencies of a healthful existence may stimulate practical reforms which, in time, will afford natural invitation to philosophic synthesis, opening the way to ideas which could find no welcome during the past epoch

of frenzied acquisition and luxurious hedonism.

By all these means, then, the closing years of the twentieth century should develop a mood of wondering and receptivity quite different from the dominant attitudes of a hundred years ago. In part that mood already exists. Manifestly, the work of the coming cycle will be work for a world in trouble, and for a world that is beginning to *know* it is in trouble. The needs of such a world have multiple dimensions. Already cyclic law has matured and disclosed numerous karmic accounts that require broad reversals of the direction of human effort and activity, and which also call for over-all moral and philosophic vision if they are to be sustained and coordinated through the coming period of extraordinary change. Some measure of the tasks which lie ahead may be obtained by recalling a sentence by Mr. Judge, and by considering its full implications. Speaking of the cycle which had its beginnings in the nineteenth century—a cycle now quite evidently accelerating—he said it was a time "when every system of thought, science, religion, government, and society is changing, and men's minds are only preparing for an alteration into that state which will permit the race to advance to the point suitable for these elder brothers to introduce their actual presence to our sight."

CORE IDEAS

The ABC of Theosophy should be taught all the time, and this, not only for the sake of outsiders, but also for the sake of the members who are, I very well know, not so far along as to need the elaborate work all the time. And it is just because the members are not well grounded that they are not able themselves to get in more inquirers. Just as you say, if the simple truths practically applied as found in Theosophy are presented, you will catch at last some of the best people—real workers and valuable members. And Theosophy can best be presented in a simple form by one who has mastered the elements as well as "the nature of the Absolute."

—WILLIAM Q. JUDGE

THE SECRET DOCTRINE

IN PYTHAGOREAN AND PLATONIC TEACHINGS

II

THE transcendental application of geometry to Cosmic and divine theogony—the Alpha and the Omega of mystical conception—became dwarfed after Pythagoras by Aristotle. By omitting the Point and the Circle, and taking no account of the apex, he reduced the metaphysical value of the idea, and thus limited the doctrine of magnitude to a simple TRIAD—the *line,* the *surface,* and the *body*. . . . "Space is a substantial though (apparently) an absolutely unknowable living Entity." (*New Aspects,* p. 9.) Such is, nevertheless, the Kabalistic teaching, and it is that of Archaic philosophy. Space is the real world, while our world is an artificial one. It is the One Unity throughout its infinitude: in its bottomless depths as on its illusive surface; a surface studded with countless phenomenal Universes, systems and mirage-like worlds. Nevertheless, to the Eastern Occultist, who is an objective Idealist at the bottom, in the *real* world, which is a Unity of Forces, there is "a connection of all matter in the *plenum,*" as Leibnitz would say. This is symbolized in the Pythagorean Triangle.

It consists of *ten points* inscribed pyramid-like (from one to the last four) within its three lines, and it symbolizes the Universe in the famous Pythagorean Decade. The upper single dot is a Monad, and represents a Unit-Point, which is *the* Unity from whence all proceeds, and all is of the same essence with it. While the ten dots within the triangle represent the phenomenal world, the three sides of the equilateral triangle which enclose the pyramid of dots are the barriers of *noumenal* Matter, or Substance, that separate it from the world of Thought. "Pythagoras considered a *point* to correspond in proportion to unity; a *line* to 2; a *superficies* to 3; a *solid* to 4; and he defined a point as a Monad having position, and the beginning of all things; a line was thought to correspond with duality, because it was produced by the first motion from indivisible nature, and formed the junction of two points. A superficies was compared to the number three because it is the first of all causes that are found in figures; for a circle, which is the

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NOTE.—This is the second installment of a three-part collation of statements taken from H. P. Blavatsky's *Secret Doctrine.*

principal of all round figures, comprises a triad, in centre—space —circumference. But a triangle, which is the first of all rectilineal figures, is included in a ternary, and receives its form according to that number; and was considered by the Pythagoreans to be the creator of all sublunary things. The four points at the base of the Pythagorean triangle correspond with a solid or cube, which combines the principles of length, breadth, and thickness, for no solid can have less than four extreme boundary points." (*Pythag. Triangle*, p. 19).

It is argued that "the human mind cannot conceive an indivisible unit short of the annihilation of the idea with its subject." This is an error, as the Pythagoreans have proved, and a number of Seers before them, although there is a special training for it, and although the profane mind can hardly grasp it. But there are such things as *metamathematics* and *metageometry*. Even mathematics pure and simple proceed from the Universal to the particular, from the mathematical, hence *indivisible* Point, to solid figures. The teaching originated in India, and was taught in Europe by Pythagoras, who, throwing a veil over the Circle and the Point—which no living man can define except as incomprehensible abstractions —laid the origin of the differentiated Cosmic matter in the basic or horizontal line of the Triangle. Thus the latter became the earliest of geometrical figures. As an emblem applicable to the objective idea, the simple triangle became a solid. When repeated in stone on the four cardinal points, it assumed the shape of the Pyramid—the symbol of the phenomenal merging into the noumenal Universe of thought—at the apex of the four triangles; and, as an "imaginary figure constructed of three mathematical lines," it symbolized the subjective spheres—those lines "enclosing a mathematical space—which is equal to nothing enclosing nothing." . . . It is the AIN-SOPH—the NO-THING.

Our most eminent chemists and physicists are earnestly pursuing the not hopeless attempt of finally tracing to its hiding-place the *protyle*, or the basic line of the Pythagorean triangle. The latter is, as said, the grandest conception imaginable, as it symbolizes both the ideal and the visible universes. In the realm of the Esoteric sciences the unit divided *ad infinitum*, instead of losing its unity, approaches with every division the planes of the only eternal REALITY. The eye of the SEER can follow and behold it in all its pregenetic glory. This same idea of the reality of the

subjective, and the unreality of the objective universes, is found at the bottom of the Pythagorean and Platonic teachings—limited to the *Elect* alone.

But the Duad, although the origin of Evil, or Matter—thence *unreal* in philosophy—is still Substance during Manvantara, and is often called the *third* monad, in Occultism, and the connecting line as between two Points, . . . or Numbers which proceeded from THAT, "which was before all Numbers," as expressed by Rabbi Barahiel. And from this Duad proceeded all the *Scintillas* of the three upper and the four lower worlds or planes—which are in constant interaction and correspondence. This is a teaching which the Kabala has in common with Eastern Occultism. It is only in the anthromorphised systems (such as the Kabala has now greatly become) that Shekinah-Sakti is feminine. As such she becomes the *Duad* of Pythagoras, the two straight lines of the symbol that can never meet, which therefore form no geometrical figure and are the symbol of matter. Out of this Duad, when united in one basic line of the triangle on the lower plane (the upper Triangle of the Sephirothal Tree), emerge the Elohim, or Deity in *Cosmic* Nature, with the true Kabalists the *lowest* designation, translated in the Bible "God." . . . Out of these issue the *Scintillas*.

The Spirit of Life and Immortality was everywhere symbolized by a circle: hence the serpent biting his tail, represents the circle of Wisdom in infinity; as does the astronomical cross—the cross within a circle. The incorporeal intelligences (the Planetary Spirits, or Creative Powers) were always represented under the form of circles. In the primitive philosophy of the Hierophants these *invisible* circles were the prototypic causes and builders of all the heavenly orbs, which were their *visible* bodies or coverings, and of which they were the souls. It was certainly a universal teaching in antiquity. (See *Ezekiel,* ch. I.)

"Before the mathematical numbers," says Proclus (in *Quinto Libro,* EUCLID), "there are the *Self-moving* numbers; before the figures apparent—the vital figures, and before producing the material worlds *which move in a Circle,* the Creative Power produced the *invisible* Circles."

Deus enim et circulus est, says Pherecydes, in his hymn to Jupiter. It was a Hermetic axiom, and Pythagoras prescribed such

a circular prostration and posture during the hours of contemplation. . . .

The Brahminical "Golden Egg," from within which emerges Brahmâ, the creative deity, is the "circle with the Central Point" of Pythagoras, and its fitting symbol. In the Secret Doctrine the concealed UNITY—whether representing PARABRAHMAM, or the "GREAT EXTREME" of Confucius, or the Deity concealed by PHTA, the Eternal Light, or again the Jewish EN-SOPH, is always found to be symbolized by a circle or the "nought" (absolute *No-Thing* and Nothing, because it is *infinite* and the ALL); while the god-manifested (by its works) is referred to as the *diameter of that circle*. The symbolism of the underlying idea is thus made evident: the right line passing through the centre of a circle has, in the geometrical sense, length, but neither breadth or thickness: it is an imaginary and feminine symbol, crossing eternity and made to rest on the plane of existence *of the phenomenal world*. It is *dimensional*, whereas its circle is dimensionless, or, to use an algebraical term, it is the dimension of an equation. Another way of symbolizing the idea is found in the Pythagorean sacred *Decade* which synthesizes, in the dual numeral *Ten* (the 1 and a circle or cipher), the absolute ALL, manifesting itself in the WORD or generative Power of Creation.

THE FALL OF THE CROSS INTO MATTER

Those who would feel inclined to argue upon this Pythagorean symbol by objecting that it is not yet ascertained, so far, at what period of antiquity the *nought* or cipher occurs for the first time—especially in India—are referred to Vol. II of *"Isis Unveiled,"* pp. 299, 300, *et seq.*

Admitting for argument's sake that the ancient world was not acquainted with our modes of calculation or Arabic figures—though we know it was—yet the *circle* and *diameter* idea is there to show that it was the *first* symbol in cosmogony. Plato and his school never understood the Deity otherwise, many epithets of his applied to the "God over all" . . . notwithstanding. Plato having been initiated, could not believe in a personal God—a gigantic Shadow of Man. His epithets of "monarch" and "Law-giver of the Universe" bear an abstract meaning well understood by every Occultist, who, no less than any Christian, believes in the One Law that governs the Universe, recognizing it at the same time as immutable. "Beyond all *finite* existences," he says, "and *secondary*

causes, all laws, ideas and principles, there is an INTELLIGENCE or MIND (noûs), the first principle of all principles, the Supreme Idea on which all other ideas are grounded . . . *the ultimate* substance *from which all things derive their being and essence,* the first and efficient cause of all the order, and harmony, and beauty and excellency, and goodness, which pervades the Universe"—who is called, by way of preëminence and excellence, the Supreme[1] good "the god," and "the god over all." These words apply, as Plato himself shows, neither to the "Creator" nor to the "Father" of our modern Monotheist, but to the *ideal* and abstract cause. For, as he says, "the god over all, *is not the truth or the intelligence,* but the FATHER of it," and its Primal cause. Is it Plato, the greatest pupil of the archaic Sages, a sage himself, for whom there was but a single object of attainment in this life—REAL KNOWLEDGE —who would have ever believed in a deity that curses and damns men for ever, on the slightest provocation? Not he, who considered only those to be genuine philosophers and students of truth who possessed the knowledge of the *really existing* in opposition to mere seeming; of the *always* existing in opposition to the transitory; and of that which exists *permanently* in opposition to that which waxes, wanes, and is developed and destroyed alternately.[2] Speusippus and Xenocrates followed in his footsteps. The ONE, the original, had no existence, in the sense applied to it by mortal men. "The *honoured* one dwells in the centre as in the circumference, but *it is only the reflection of the Deity*—the world Soul"[3] —the plane of the surface of the circle. The Cross and Circle are a universal conception—as old as human mind itself. They stand foremost on the list of the long series of, so to say, international symbols, which expressed very often great scientific truths, besides their direct bearing upon psychological, and even physiological mysteries; and this symbol is precisely one of this kind, and is based upon the oldest esoteric cosmogony.

The shadowy, but firmly rooted image of God, as the *noumenon* of all, was called more philosophically by the ancient (and modern) philosophers and Occultists—"Gods," or the *creative* fashioning Powers. The modes of expression may have been different, and the ideas more or less philosophically enunciated by all sacred and profane Antiquity; but the fundamental thought was the

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[1] Cocker's "Christianity and Greek Philosophy," xi, p. 377.
[2] See "Isis Unveiled," *Before the Veil,* xii, (Vol. I.).
[3] Plato; "Parmenides," 141, E.

same. For Pythagoras the Forces were Spiritual Entities, Gods independent of planets and Matter as we see and know them on Earth, who are the rulers of the Sidereal Heaven. Plato represented the planets as moved by an *intrinsic* Rector, one with his dwelling, like "A boatman in his boat." As for Aristotle, he called those rulers "*immaterial* substances"; though as one who had never been initiated, he rejected the gods as *Entities*. But this did not prevent him from recognizing the fact that the stars and planets "were not inanimate masses but *acting* and *living* bodies indeed. . . ."

"Plato [writes Boulanger] in his fourth book of *Laws,* says that, long before the construction of the first cities, Saturn had established on earth a *certain* form of government under which man was very happy. As it is the golden age he refers to, or to that reign of gods so celebrated in ancient fables . . . let us see the ideas he had of that happy age, and what was the occasion he had to introduce this *fable* into a treatise on politics. According to Plato, in order to obtain clear and precise ideas on royalty, its origin and power, one has to turn back to the first principles of history and tradition. Great changes, he says, have occurred in days of old, *in heaven and on earth,* and the present state of things is one of the results (*Karma*). Our traditions tell us of many marvels, of changes that have taken place in the course of the Sun, of Saturn's reign, and of a thousand other matters that remained scattered about in human memory; but *one never hears anything of the* EVIL *which has produced those revolutions, nor of the evil which directly followed them.* Yet . . . that Evil is the principle one has to talk about, to be able to treat of royalty and the origin of power."

That *evil,* Plato seems to see in the sameness or consubstantiality of the natures of the rulers and the ruled, for he says that long before man built his cities, in the golden age, there was naught but happiness on earth, for there were no needs. Why? Because Saturn, knowing that man could not rule man, without injustice filling forthwith the universe through his whims and vanity, would not allow any mortal to obtain power over his fellow creatures. To do this the god used the same means we use ourselves with regard to our flocks. We do not place a bullock or a ram over our bullocks and rams, but give them a leader, a shepherd, *i.e., a being of a species quite different from their own and of a superior nature.* It is just what Saturn did. He loved mankind and placed

to rule over it no mortal King or prince but—"Spirits and genii . . . of a divine nature more excellent than that of man."

It was god, the Logos (the synthesis of the Host) who thus presiding over the genii, became the first shepherd and leader of men.[4] When the world had ceased to be so governed and the gods retired, "ferocious beasts devoured a portion of mankind." "Left to their own resources and industry, inventors then appeared among them successively and discovered fire, wheat, wine; and public gratitude deified them . . ." (*"De Legibus" I, iv.; in Crit. and in Politic*).

How precise and true is Plato's expression, how profound and philosophical his remark on the (human) soul or EGO, when he defined it as "a compound of the *same* and the *other*." And yet how little this hint has been understood, since the world took it to mean that the soul was the breath of God, of Jehovah. It is "the *same* and the *other*," as the great Initiate-Philosopher said; for the EGO (the "Higher Self" when merged with and in the Divine Monad) is Man, and yet the *same* as the "OTHER," the Angel in him incarnated, as the same with the universal MAHAT. The great classics and philosophers felt this truth, when saying that "there must be something within us which produces our thoughts. Something very subtle; it is a breath; it is fire; it is ether; it is quintessence; it is a slender likeness; it is an intellection; it is a number; it is harmony . . ." (*Voltaire*).

The Great Gods create men with the bodies of birds of the desert, human beings, "seven kings, brothers of the same family," etc., which is a reference to the locomotive qualities of the primary ethereal bodies of men, which could fly as well as they could walk,[5] but who "were destroyed" because they were not *"perfect," i.e.*, they were sexless, like the Kings of Edom."

Plato speaks, in the *Phaedrus*, of a *winged race of men*. Aristophanes (*in Plato's* Banquet), speaks of a race androgynous and with round bodies. In *Pymander*, all the animal kingdom even is double-sexed. Thus it is said; "The circuit having been accomplished, *the knot was loosened* . . . and all the animals, which were equally androgynous, were *untied*, (separated) *together with man*. . . ." for. . . . "the causes had to produce effects on earth."

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[4] The Secret Doctrine explains and expounds that which Plato says, for it teaches that those "inventors" were gods and demi-gods (Devas and Rishis) who had become—some deliberately, some forced to by Karma—incarnated in man.

[5] Remember the "winged Races" of Plato; and the *Popol Vuh* accounts of the first human race, which could walk, fly and see objects, however distant.

Again, in the ancient Quiché Manuscript, the *Popol Vuh*—published by the late Abbé Brasseur de Bourbourg—the first men are described as a race "whose sight was unlimited, and who knew all things at once": thus showing the *divine knowledge of Gods,* not mortals. The Secret Doctrine, correcting the unavoidable exaggerations of popular fancy, gives the facts as they are recorded in the Archaic symbols.

What say the old sages, the philosopher-teachers of antiquity? Aristophanes speaks thus on the subject in Plato's "Banquet": "Our nature of old was not the same as it is now. It was *androgynous,* the form and name partaking of, and being common to both the male and female . . . Their bodies were round, and the manner of their running circular.[6] They were terrible in force and strength and had prodigious ambition. Hence Zeus *divided each of them into two,* making them weaker; Apollo, under his direction, closed up the skin."

The separation of the sexes was in the programme of nature and of natural evolution; and the creative faculty in male and female was a gift of Divine wisdom. In the truth of such traditions the whole of antiquity, from the patrician philosopher to the humblest spiritually inclined plebian, has believed. And as we proceed, we may successfully show that the *relative* truth of such legends, if not their absolute exactness—vouched for by such giants of intellect as were Solon, Pythagoras, Plato and others—begins to dawn upon more than one modern scientist.

In view of this circular form, the "I" issuing from the "O" or the egg, or the male from the female in the androgyne, it is strange to find a scholar saying—on the ground that the most ancient Indian MSS. show no trace of it—that the ancient Aryans were ignorant of the decimal notation. The 10, being the sacred number of the universe, was secret and esoteric, both as the unit and cipher, or *zero,* the circle. As to the Pythagoreans, we need but turn to the ancient manuscripts of Boethius's *Geometry,* composed in the sixth century, to find among the Pythagorean numerals the 1 and the *nought,* as the first and final ciphers. And Porphyry, who quotes from the Pythagorean *Moderatus,* says that the numerals of Pythagoras were "hieroglyphical symbols, by means whereof he explained ideas concerning the nature of things," or

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[6] Compare Ezekiel's vision (chap. 1) of the four divine beings who "had the likeness of a man" and yet had the appearance of a wheel, "when they went they went upon their four sides . . . for the spirit of the living creature was in the wheel."

the origin of the universe. Pythagoras derived his knowledge from India; and we find Professor Max Müller corroborating this statement, at least so far as to allow the *Neo*-Pythagoreans to have been the first teachers of "ciphering," among the Greeks and Romans; that "they at Alexandria, or in Syria, became acquainted with the Indian figures, and adapted them to the Pythagorean abacus" (our figures). This cautious admission implies that Pythagoras himself was acquainted with but *nine* figures. Thus we might reasonably answer that, although we possess no certain proof (*exoterically*) that the decimal notation was known by Pythagoras, who lived on the close of the archaic ages, we have yet sufficient evidence to show that the full numbers, as given by Boethius, were known to the Pythagoreans, even before Alexandria was built. This evidence we find in Aristotle, who says that "some philosophers hold that ideas and numbers are of the same nature, and amount to TEN in all." This, we believe, will be sufficient to show that the decimal notation was known among them at least as early as four centuries B.C., for Aristotle does not seem to treat the question as an innovation of the "Neo-Pythagoreans."

NOTE.—The volume and page references to the *Secret Doctrine* for the material in this installment are as follows: i, 615-19; ii, 552-5; ii, 554-5; i, 492-3; ii, 372-3; ii, 88, 89; ii, 55; ii, 96; ii, 133-34; ii, 217; i, 360 361.

We need not mind what we have not done nor yet what we have done. Have care only for what we are doing; so shall we best work and serve. Like St. Paul, we find the spirit willing but the flesh weak, yet the latter gets stronger all the time. It looks weaker than it is because of the higher standard of judgment we apply to it. Always the inner is the more perfect, and it is that which does the work of perfecting. "He who seeth that all his actions are performed by nature only and that the Self within is not the actor sees indeed."

—ROBERT CROSBIE

letters · questions · comment

Sudden events bringing either good fortune or catastrophic ill, whether to individuals or to the mass of mankind, are difficult to understand. These happenings, apparently coming out of nowhere, just overtake people, making the idea of "universal law" seem as inscrutable as "God's will." While metaphysical analysis may show the difference between these two conceptions in principle, can a less abstract account of the difference be given?

The basic difference is that the explanation of "the will of God" gives no basis for obtaining a better understanding of such events through inquiry and reflection, while the doctrine of Karma is exactly that. At the level of the impact of a sudden disastrous event, such happenings may seem wholly without rational meaning, but simply thinking about the threads of moral causation in human life can result in a feeling of understanding. A good example of this is found in Thornton Wilder's novel, *The Bridge of San Luis Rey*, a story which traces the lives of several people up to the moment when they were overtaken by a common disaster. The book could be called an imaginative study in Karma.

The need to understand the events of life—to look for answers—is the hallmark of being human. It is a natural corollary of this quality in ourselves that we live in an orderly universe, ruled by laws that can in some measure be found out, and that these laws reflect the presence of intelligence operating on the plane of causation. If an event is presumed to have a natural rather than a supernatural cause, something of the nature of that cause can be learned from examination of the nature of the effect. It is here that the difference between universal law and "divine will" becomes apparent in experience. If the cause originates in the mind of an extracosmic being, there is no need, and no way, to learn anything, except perhaps submission to this "will." If this is a universe of law, however, with man's place in it as a conscious learner, then acceptance of the inevitable is not the end, but only the first step. So long as the victims of an earthquake regard themselves *only* as victims, seeing the ruins around them only as ruins, they are

not likely to think about the ultimate cause of their suffering. But in questioning "why," with some confidence that there *is* an answer—that a cause-effect relationship is behind all happenings—men give evidence that they are more than the pawns of fate—that the course of events can be altered as well as endured. With this outlook clues to the nature of the cause may be gained in various ways: generally, by study of the modes of the operation of Karma (as given, for example, in Mr. Judge's "Aphorisms on Karma"), and by attention to the field of human experience. For example, what might be the Karma of those who build homes on an eroding cliff, or a city on top of a geologic fault? The physical Karma would be one category of effect, the moral Karma another. Did they know what they were doing? Did they try to find out?

In other words, the assumption that this is a universe of law does not confer knowledge, but it makes learning possible and a duty.

If the influence of the Devachanee's ideal dream has a beneficent effect on those who are living, would not idealized thoughts by the living about other living persons have an even more beneficial effect because of the activity of will?

It seems significant that the devachanee is not thinking *about* those the ego left behind on earth; he is *with* them in his dream. This means that in this condition there is no sense of separateness from those who are loved. Surely this communion-like state of mind among living men would and does spread a beneficent influence among the living. Yet the devachanic condition is an illusion in the sense that it cannot engage the whole man, but only the fruit of a single episode—his last life:

> During every Devachanic period the Ego, omniscient as it is *per se*, clothes itself, so to say, with the *reflection* of the "personality" that was. I have just told you that the *ideal* efflorescence of all the abstract, there undying and eternal qualities or attributes, such as love and mercy, the love of the good, the true and the beautiful, that ever spoke in the heart of the living "personality," clung after death to the Ego, and therefore followed it to Devachan. For the time being, then, the Ego becomes the ideal reflection of the human being it was when last on earth, and *that* is not omniscient. (*The Key to Theosophy*, p. 147-48.)

But even on earth these attributes have qualities unconfined by place, time, or condition, although their expression is subject to

such limitations. H.P.B. says that "pure divine love is not merely the blossom of a human heart, but has its roots in eternity." This suggests a feeling unbounded by differences. The influence of the devachanee has great potency because its purity is unalloyed with the blemishes of earthly life. But human effort on earth to learn to love others, regardless of their condition, involves, not unawareness of their faults, nor even an idealization of their virtues, but a recognition of their potentialities. Encouraging possibilities to become actualities is surely a beneficent force that reaches beyond any state.

THE THOUGHTS OF MARCUS AURELIUS ANTONIUS

I learned from my great grandfather not to have frequented public schools, and to have had good teachers at home, and to know that on such things a man should spend liberally.

Begin the morning by saying to thyself, I shall meet with the busybody; the ungrateful, arrogant, deceitful, envious, unsocial. All these things happen to them by reason of their ignorance of what is good and evil. But I, who have seen the nature of him who does wrong, that it is akin to me not only of the same blood or seed, but that it participates in the same intelligence and portion of the divinity. I can neither be injured by any of them, for no one can fix on me what is ugly nor can I be angry with my kinsman, nor hate him. For we are made for cooperation, like feet, like hands, like eyelids, like rows of the upper and lower teeth. To act against one another then is contrary to nature; and it is acting against one another to be vexed and turn away.

The soul does violence to itself when it is overpowered by pleasure or pain.

Let the duty which is in thee be the guardian of a living being.

—*Lucifer*, 1890

FACETS OF THE SELF

IN incarnation the Self of man divides itself into two selves, it seems. One of these selves is the continuing observer, the witness to life. The other, the reflection of that self in matter, becomes subject to all the compelling illusions produced by the waves of manifestation. In attempting to bring the two into a common focus, the consciousness of man may take the position of either one. That is, he may think of himself as the personal man, in which case he devotes the resources of the ego to cultivating and protecting this mask; or he may mentally assume the position of the reincarnating ego, representative of that higher impersonal self, striving to bring the lower self into alignment with it. Inevitably, he will oscillate between these two positions until he has gained both the wisdom and the strength to maintain them in right relationship for the purposes of the indwelling soul.

The need to bring the two into alignment presents a man with two alternatives. First, he can respond to the favorable influences that the environment provides, inviting him to grow as a flower grows, by adjusting to conditions, becoming active in favorable seasons, retiring in unfavorable ones. This is in accordance with the fundamental operation of law in nature. But another law of development is also accessible to men: they have the capacity to turn any event into the material for growth in some fresh direction —a growth which adds something of manasic awareness to the reservoir of strength available to all.

This gradual change of the balance in egoic perception—the movement from dependence on the right conditions to self-initiated effort arising within—is accomplished and reflected through many facets of man's being. But this change will proceed best, we may think, from recognition that all the powers and qualities evident in the environment, generating both favorable and unfavorable conditions, have correspondences within ourselves. Skill in the performance of action, called "yoga," should result from seeing the reality of these correspondences, and working with them.

Each self acts and reacts on other selves. By recognizing the

inherent potential, the emerging individuality in others, we might give these correspondences usefulness of a higher order. For example, great teachers throughout the ages have done this by turning even attacks into opportunities for the instruction of all who would listen. With this objective, then, mere circumstances may contribute a realization far greater than what seems implicit in them. Seen in another way, this is the product of the ongoing human drama—the further lighting up of Manas.

The practice of the virtues described in *The Voice of the Silence,* with this in mind, would tend to produce mental and psychic environments by which, through correspondence, internal strength can be cultivated. The subtle, even fragile, character of these environments, which are more psychological than physical, reminds one that Karma, out of which they grow, is cause as well as effect.

SELF-KNOWLEDGE

The first necessity for obtaining self-knowledge is to become profoundly conscious of ignorance; to feel with every fibre of the heart that one is ceaselessly self-deceived.

The second requisite is the still deeper conviction that such knowledge—such intuitive and certain knowledge—can be obtained by effort.

The third and most important is an indomitable determination to obtain and face that knowledge.

Self-knowledge of this kind is unattainable by what men usually call "self-analysis." It is not reached by reasoning or any brain process; for it is the awakening to consciousness of the Divine nature of man.

To obtain this knowledge is a greater achievement than to command the elements or to know the future.

—*Lucifer,* 1887

on the lookout

Means to Future Growth

Countering what he regards as blind optimism concerning general conditions in the United States, Page Smith (*Los Angeles Times,* Oct. 16, 1975) enumerates the problems that must be solved before our society can be called healthy or in any sense "successful." Most interesting, however, is Mr. Smith's view of how the constructive changes taking place in contemporary thinking may take root and eventually create a better society. History, he says, suggests that the capacity to respond to efforts for reform and improvement is deeply rooted in mankind itself. His expansion of this outlook recalls Mr. Judge's statement that a further incarnation of Manas will impel man to "seize the Key in his hands and himself—as a whole—open the gate."

A Beginning Under Way

Advocating no particular program, Mr. Smith expresses what seems intuitive awareness of these inner resources. Speaking of future changes for the better, he says:

> It will not be done by government planners but by ordinary people. All the great transformations of history are mass transformations. They do not come from the top but from the bottom. And it is clear enough that this is already happening. In small communities, among people who have written off the existing order and all its powers and potentates, there are men and women who are already, in some tentative, modest ways, living in the new order.
>
> Our greatest resource is not our vast industrial plants (which may be obsolete tomorrow), our battleships and bombs and inexhaustible granaries, our presumptuous manipulation of an increasingly precarious world economy; it is, rather, our history. We were born in a revolution which promised a new human "order," and which did, in simple fact, give hopes to millions of the hopeless around the world. We filled up a vast continent, creating, as we did, those "mystic chords of memory"—our history—that bind us together as a people.

After quoting William James on the necessity for small enter-

prises and direct relations between individuals as the means by which "the invisible molecular moral forces" leaven human affairs, Mr. Smith concludes:

> New forms of common life and action are growing up within the dying forms. James' "invisible molecular moral forces" are "stealing in through the crannies of the world like so many soft rootlets . . ." and creating the matrix for the new, as yet barely perceived, order.

Reclaiming the Sahara

An example of the remarkable power of grass-roots effort to move people to regenerative action may be seen in the success of a single Englishwoman in recovering land from the Sahara Desert by planting trees. According to a report in the San Diego *Union* (May 18, 1975), she reasoned that a "wall of green" around the desert could save large numbers of people threatened by starvation. The *Union* report says:

> Miss Campbell-Purdie was working for a timber firm in Corsica when English tree expert Richard St. Barre Baker convinced her his "green wall" idea could tame the desert.
>
> "But he got ill and couldn't do anything about it," she said. "So finally I went off by myself."
>
> She headed for Morocco on a one-way ticket, rented 45 acres of desert and, with her own money, began to plant trees.
>
> "People thought I was daft," she said.
>
> But Miss Campbell-Purdie knew trees would stop sandstorms, cool the atmosphere upward to seven times their own height, and increase surface humidity enough to make land fertile again.
>
> She planted 2,000 trees at Tiznit. In four years they were 12 feet high and she grew wheat and barley in their shelter.

"Green Wall" of Fertility

Later, after obtaining financial help in England, she returned to Bou Saada, an abandoned military dump given her by the Algerian government, where she had managed to maintain 800 living trees out of a thousand seedlings.

The report in the *Union* describes the volunteers who showed up to help her plant more trees:

> "As I got out of the car, I heard music from a three-piece band," she said. "Following them marched a great army of tree planters—thousands, literally thousands, of volunteers" . . .
>
> A few months ago, she revisited her Bou Saada plantation, now a going concern. Her 130,000 trees are flourishing. The

fertile area they created grows vegetables, grain, and citrus fruits. It has given unemployed villagers work and wealth and inspired the government to use Miss Campbell-Purdie's full "green wall" blueprint.

Wise Doctor or "Murderer"?

The moral dilemmas overtaking a civilization which still endeavors to honor humanistic ideals while rationalizing them on the assumptions of materialism are well illustrated by a case now before the Swiss courts. In January, 1975, a Swiss physician, Urs Peter Haemmerli, was arrested on a charge of murder. The event appalled and astonished numerous residents of Zurich, since they knew this doctor as the wholly reliable and professionally respected chief of medicine in one of the city's leading hospitals. It developed that his offense lay in allowing to die, over a period of four years, patients who were so close to death that they would never regain consciousness and were being kept alive by artificial feeding, "usually through tubes that pour solutions of nutrients directly into their stomachs." The report of Dr. Haemmerli's arrest, in *Science* for last Dec. 26, explains that he was taken into custody for trial on the complaint of a Zurich politician who hoped to gain fame and election to a national office by this means. The politician lost the election and is forgotten, but the case of Dr. Haemmerli remains before the world.

Pointless Treatment

The *Science* writer recalls the case in the United States of Karen Quinlan, the young woman for so long artificially kept alive in a respirator, by court order, against the wishes of her family. This unfortunate girl, the writer says, had "shriveled into a fetal position," and, similarly, the elderly Swiss patients who were allowed to die were comotose, victims of brain damage, already dead except for artificially sustained biological function. The point of view of Dr. Haemmerli is given in a concluding paragraph:

> Once the determination of irreversible brain loss has been made, Haemmerli sees no distinction between pulling the plug on a respirator and withholding antibiotics or nutrients. In his hospital, he says, it is unlikely there would ever be a Karen Quinlan because they would not get caught up in the semantics of whether pulling the plug is a special sort of "act" just because it is so physical and easy to visualize. Haemmerli would pull the plug because he would think it pointless not to,

not because he would think of himself as practicing euthanasia.

"Lawyers and other persons alien to medicine often find it hard to grasp this concept of pointlessness," Haemmerli told the Council [in an address before the Council of Europe]. "For the doctor there is 'point' in any therapy which seems likely to succeed. . . . But if it is unsuccessful and if no other therapeutic possibilities exist, then the treatment begun clearly becomes pointless."

Cause of "Dilemmas"

The *Science* reporter speaks of the "terrible dilemma that medical technology has created," and there are indeed ramifying issues which Dr. Haemmerli describes, in order to explain why "family consent" may be a very poor guide to follow in such decisions. But the really stultifying side of the situation becomes evident only when an attempt is made to think what would happen to all such problems among a people who accept and rely upon reincarnation as the basic law of both life and death. The technologies of pointless life extension, prolonging only physical existence after intelligence can no longer function, would never have developed in such a society. In fact, both birth and death would in such a society be understood as processes naturally engendered by a non-physical being who at one time seeks a body and at another is ready to leave it. Large areas of continuing controversy, such as the questions of birth control, abortion, sexual aberration, along with the issue of euthanasia, would be seen in a very different light, once the purposes of soul and the meaning of incarnation were grasped and their implications understood. Courageous doctors such as Urs Haemmerli and others may be of considerable help in causing people to question more deeply the present-day assumptions about life and death.

Welcome Scientific Candor

Another article in *Science* for Dec. 26 covers a related question—the general impoverishment of modern thought on moral questions. A reviewer, Joseph Adelson, discusses a current volume of research papers titled *Moral Development,* finding the contributions on the whole vague and unsatisfactory. He speaks of two papers whose excellence reveals mainly "the essential thinness of secure learning in this field." While the contributors to this volume, Mr. Adelson says, are intelligent and "surprisingly critical in tone," none of them points toward any real solution of "the Great American Moral Problem."

> To the contrary, this volume reminds us forcefully of the underdevelopment of psychology as a science, of its difficulties when confronting any truly complicated realm of behavior. So the reader will not learn from this book how to prevent a Watergate, or how to raise a virtuous child, or even how to improve his own character, but he may learn quite a bit about the intellectual and empirical habits of social and development psychologists when they grapple with great issues.

Such critical discussions, openly admitting the shortcomings of modern knowledge and speaking candidly of weakness in relation to Morality, suggest that the modern world is entering the last quarter of the twentieth century in a chastened mood, quite possibly preparing to consider points of view which have been unable to obtain a hearing during the past fifty or seventy-five years.

Mysterious Basques

The *Los Angeles Times* (June 5, 1975), reports that markings on primitive gravestones in Pennsylvania, once thought to be "illiterate Viking inscriptions," are in an ancient language from which modern Basque is derived. Similar writing has been found in Ohio and Arkansas and in Mexico and South America. In *The Secret Doctrine* (II, 790), in a section reviewing evidence for the existence of lost continents, H.P.B. observes that the language of the Basques, while related to the tongue of the Dravidian races of India, is recognized by scholars to have no affinities with other European languages, but with *"the aboriginal languages of the vast opposite continent* (America) *and those alone."* She adds in a footnote:

> For further facts as to the *isolation* of the Basques in Europe and their ethnological relations, cf. Joly, *"Man before Metals,"* p. 316. B. Davis is disposed to concede, from an examination of the skulls of the *Guanches of the Canary Islands and modern Basques,* that both belong to a race proper to *those ancient islands, of which the Canaries are the remains!!*

Atlantean Origin

Later investigators, Henry Fairfield Osborn for one, saw a connection between the Guanches and the Basques, and he also linked these ethnic groups with the Cro-Magnon race. The Basque language is of the agglutinative type, related structurally to American Indian forms of speech. Light is thrown on the origin of the Basques by H.P.B.'s statement in *The Secret Doctrine* that northwest Africa was once connected with Atlantis by a "network of

islands," and she observes (*S.D.* II, 740) that African tribes—"diverging offshoots of Atlanteans modified by climate and conditions"—crossed into Europe over the peninsula which made the Mediterranean an inland sea. Among these migrants were the Cro-Magnon cave-men—a strong and TALL race whose qualities are recognized as surviving in the *Guanches* of the Canary Islands.

As evidence accumulates, and as scholars become more open-minded and daring, there is growing likelihood that anthropologists and archaeologists will at last give attention to the synthesizing explanations of *The Secret Doctrine* concerning the migrations of peoples from Atlantis and the enormous antiquity of civilized man.

Needed Reforms

Review by Adrienne Rich of two books relating to childbirth gives evidence of changing attitudes toward women and also a return to more natural methods in childbirth. Writing in the *New York Review of Books,* Oct. 2, 1975, Miss Rich presents the view, well argued by Suzanne Arms in *Immaculate Deception: A New Look at Women and Childbirth,* that expectant mothers should have as their natural prerogative the decision of where, when, and by what methods they should give birth, the role of medical assistance being secondary and supportive. The author reports that in countries where this attitude prevails, whether from enlightened practice or time-honored custom, there has been less risk, shorter labor, and fewer birth-caused defects in infants. Miss Rich speaks of the present challenge to the idea, common in America, that women should participate only passively in an experience classed as a medical emergency and dominated by a technology presided over by men. She traces this subordination of women to religious views—the idea that travail is "Eve's curse" for tempting Adam being an example in Hebrew tradition.

Artificial Problems

The simpler, natural ways of the past (and, apparently, the future) are to be preferred to the present subjection of women in childbirth to medical technology:

> The artificially induced and stimulated labor, so common in this country, creates longer, stronger contractions with less relaxation-span between them than the contractions of normal labor. This in turn leads to the use of pain-relieving drugs; medical technology here creates its own artificial problem, for

which an artificial solution must be found. Moreover, these unnaturally strong and lengthy contractions often deprive the fetus of oxygen, while the analgesic drugs interfere with its respiration. If labor in the United States were induced only in cases of medical necessity, only about 3 percent of births would be induced. In fact, at least one in five births are drug-induced or stimulated, for the physician's convenience and with no medical justification whatsoever.

Infant Rights

Pioneers of more natural methods of conducting childbirth, among them Grantly Dick-Read, Fernand Lamaze, and Sheila Kitzinger, have made it a more humane experience for many women. But the point stressed by the reviewer is that childbirth should not be treated as the sole fulfillment of a woman's life. The participants, mother and child, are individuals engaged in a "rite of passage," capable of yielding greater awareness for the mother and psychic stability and sensitivity for the newborn individual. The second book, Leboyer's *Birth without Violence,* makes a vivid and impassioned case for the rights of the newly born as an individual instead of an object, but is said by the reviewer to neglect the importance of the bond between mother and child, assuming that she is sufficiently served by the traditional methods of anesthetic delivery. Miss Rich observes that "infant and mother are a continuum," their mutual interaction supporting the health of both.

Herald of Birth

Interestingly, a report in the *Los Angeles Times* (Feb. 12, 1975) confirms Dr. Leboyer's statement that "the stimulus that sets labor in motion comes from the child, just as the Ancients said it did." Medical researchers, the *Times* says, have discovered that it is the child who initiates the birth processes at the proper time:

> It turns out that the key organ in the timing process is the fetal brain, more specifically a region of the brain called the hypothalamus.
>
> The hypothalamus' job is to integrate information coming to it from all over the body by way of the fetal nervous system and circulatory system in the form of electrical impulses and hormones in the blood.
>
> The information that the hypothalamus receives and coordinates tells it the degree of maturity of each of the organ sys-

tems at any given moment.

Eventually—usually around 40 weeks—the signals reaching the hypothalamus tell it that all organ systems are mature enough to go it alone in the outside world.

When that happens, the hypothalamus releases a chemical that sets off a chain of events culminating in the release by the fetal adrenal glands of two substances that act on the tissue lining the uterus, triggering other chemical changes that produce contraction.

The import of this discovery, still only partially understood, is that the natural rhythms of nature, affecting humans, have their source in an ordering intelligence which governs the complex and subtle processes of life.

Pointless and Untrue

The first volume of Col. Olcott's *Old Diary Leaves* was reprinted last year in paperback by a Philadelphia publisher under the misleading title, *Inside the Occult,* with the subtitle, "The True Story of Madame H. P. Blavatsky," also misleading. While there are various matters of interest in this volume by the first president of the Theosophical Society, Col. Olcott's garrulous and not always accurate reminiscences are hardly a reliable source for understanding either H.P.B. or "the occult." It happens that this edition of *Old Diary Leaves* deserves to be ignored for other reasons. The publisher is apparently illiterate, referring to Madame Blavatsky as "a phenomena in her own time." The editor who writes the foreword twice identifies her first work as *Isis Revealed,* despite the fact that the correct title is given many times throughout Col. Olcott's text. The editor also gratuitously and falsely remarks that H.P.B. was "a hashish eater." The appearance of this purposeless, calumniating aside on the first page of a garishly designed reprint may account for its repetition in the *Newsweek* report (Nov. 24, 1975) of the Theosophical Society's centennial convention in New York last November. Other long disproved assertions about Theosophy and H.P.B. also appeared in the *Newsweek* article, and were appropriately answered by a letter from the president of the Theosophical Society in America (*Newsweek,* Jan. 5). Other letters to *Newsweek* branding as false the claim that H.P.B. used a now fashionable narcotic were not printed by the publisher.